

AIR FORCE REGULATION  
NO. 80-17DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
Washington, D. C. 19 September 1966

## Research And Development

## UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS (UFO)

*This regulation establishes the Air Force program for investigating and analyzing UFOs over the United States. It provides for uniform investigative procedures and release of information. The investigations and analyses prescribed are related directly to the Air Force's responsibility for the air defense of the United States. The UFO Program requires prompt reporting and rapid evaluation of data for successful identification. Strict compliance with this regulation is mandatory.*

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## SECTION A—GENERAL PROVISIONS

**1. Explanation of Terms.** To insure proper and uniform usage of terms in UFO investigations, reports, and analyses, an explanation of common terms follows:

a. *Unidentified Flying Objects.* Any aerial phenomenon or object which is unknown or appears out of the ordinary to the observer.

b. *Familiar or Known Objects/Phenomena.* Aircraft, aircraft lights, astronomical bodies (meteors, planets, stars, comets, sun, moon), balloons, birds, fireworks, missiles, rockets, satellites, searchlights, weather phenomena (clouds, contrails, dust devils), and other natural phenomena.

**2. Program Objectives.** Air Force interest in UFOs is two-fold: to determine if the UFO

is a possible threat to the United States and to use the scientific or technical data gained from study of UFO reports. To attain these objectives, it is necessary to explain or identify the stimulus which caused the observer to report his observation as an unidentified flying object.

a. *Air Defense.* The majority of UFOs reported to the Air Force have been conventional or familiar objects which present no threat to our security.

(1) It is possible that foreign countries may develop flying vehicles of revolutionary configuration or propulsion.

(2) Frequently, some alleged UFOs are determined to be aircraft. Air Defense Command (ADC) is responsible for identification

of aircraft. Except as aircraft are determined to be the stimulus for a UFO report, aircraft are not to be reported under the provisions of this regulation.

b. *Technical and Scientific.* The Air Force will analyze reports of UFOs submitted to it to attain the program objectives. In this connection these facts are of importance:

(1) The need for further scientific knowledge in geophysics, astronomy, and physics of the upper atmosphere which may be provided by study and analysis of UFOs and similar aerial phenomena.

(2) The need to report all pertinent factors that have a direct bearing on scientific analysis and conclusions of UFO sightings.

(3) The need and the importance of complete case information. Analysis has explained all but a small percentage of the sightings which have been reported to the Air Force. The ones that have not been explained are carried statistically as "unidentified." Because of the human factors involved and because analysis of a UFO sighting depends primarily on a personal impression and interpretation by the observer rather than on scientific data or facts obtained under controlled conditions, the elimination of all unidentifies is improbable. However, if more immediate, detailed, and objective data on the unidentifieds had been available and promptly reported, perhaps these, too, could have been identified.

### 3. Program Responsibilities:

a. *Program Monitor.* The Deputy Chief of Staff, Research and Development, is responsible for the overall program, evaluation of investigative procedures, and the conduct of separate scientific investigations.

b. *Resources.* The Air Force Systems Command will support the program with current resources within the Foreign Technology Division (FTD) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, to continue the Project Blue Book effort. Other AFSC resources normally used by FTD for this effort will continue to be made available.

c. *Investigation.* Each commander of an Air Force base will provide a UFO investigative capability. When notice of a UFO sighting is received, an investigation will be implemented to determine the stimulus for the sighting. An Air Force base receiving the notice of a UFO sighting may not be the base nearest the locale of the sighting. In that event, the reported UFO sighting will be referred to the Air Force base nearest the sighting for action.

**EXCEPTIONS:** FTD at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, independently or with the help of pertinent Air Force activities, may conduct any other investigation to conclude its analysis or findings. HQ USAF may arrange for separate investigations.

d. *Analysis.* FTD will:

(1) Analyze and evaluate all information and evidence reported to bases on those UFOs which are not identified at the base level.

(2) Use other Government agencies, private industrial companies, and contractor personnel to assist in analyzing and evaluating UFO reports, as necessary.

e. *Findings.* FTD, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, will prepare a final case report on each sighting reported to it after the data have been properly evaluated. If the final report is deemed significant, FTD will send the report of its findings to AFSC (SCFA), Andrews AFB, Wash DC 20331, which will send a report to HQ USAF (AFRDC), Wash DC 20330.

f. *Cooperation.* All Air Force activities will cooperate with UFO investigators to insure that pertinent information relative to investigations of UFO sightings are promptly obtained. When feasible, this will include furnishing air or ground transportation and other assistance.

### SECTION B—PUBLIC RELATIONS, INFORMATION, CONTACTS, AND RELEASES

4. **Response to Public Interest.** The Secretary of the Air Force, Office of Information (SAF-OI), maintains contact with the public and the news media on all aspects of the UFO program and related activities. Private individuals or organizations desiring Air Force interviews, briefings, lectures, or private discussions on UFOs will be instructed to direct their requests to SAF-OI. Air Force members not officially connected with UFO investigations covered by this regulation will refrain from any action or comment on UFO reports which may mislead or cause the public to construe these opinions as official Air Force findings.

5. **Releasing Information.** SAF-OI is the agency responsible for releasing information to the public and to the news media.

a. *Congressional and Presidential Inquiries.* The Office of Legislative Liaison will:

(1) With the assistance of SAF-OI, an-

swer all Congressional and Presidential queries regarding UFOs forwarded to the Air Force.

(2) Process requests from Congressional sources in accordance with AFR 11-7.

b. *SAF-OI will:*

(1) Respond to correspondence from individuals requesting information on the UFO Program and evaluations of sightings.

(2) Release information on UFO sightings and results of investigations to the general public.

(3) Send correspondence queries which are purely technical and scientific to FTD for information on which to base a reply.

c. *Exceptions.* In response to local inquiries regarding UFOs reported in the vicinity of an Air Force base, the base commander may release information to the news media or the public after the sighting has been positively identified. If the stimulus for the sighting is difficult to identify at the base level, the commander may state that the sighting is under investigation and conclusions will be released by SAF-OI after the investigation is completed. The commander may also state that the Air Force will review and analyze the results of the investigation. Any further inquiries will be directed to SAF-OI.

## SECTION C—PREPARING AND SUBMITTING REPORTS

### 6. General Information:

a. The Deputy Chief of Staff, Research and Development, USAF and the ADC have a direct and immediate interest in UFOs reported within the US. All Air Force activities will conduct UFO investigations to the extent necessary for reporting action (see paragraphs 9, 10, 11, and 12). Investigation may be carried beyond this point when the preparing officer believes the scientific or public relations aspect of the case warrants further investigation. In this case, the investigator will coordinate his continued investigation with FTD.

b. Paragraph 7 will be used as a guide for screenings, investigations, and reportings. Paragraph 11 is an outline of the reporting format.

c. Inquiries should be referred to SAF-OI (see paragraph 5).

d. If possible, an individual selected as a UFO investigator should have a scientific or technical background and experience as an investigator.

e. Reports required by this regulation are excluded from assignment of a reports control symbol in accordance with paragraph 3k, AFR 300-5.

**7. Guidance in Preparing Reports.** The usefulness of a UFO report depends largely on accuracy, timeliness, skill and resourcefulness of the person who receives the initial information and makes the report. Following are aids for screening, evaluating and reporting sightings:

a. Activities receiving initial reports of aerial objects and phenomena will screen the information to determine if the report concerns a valid UFO as defined in paragraph 1a. Reports not falling within that definition do not require further action. Aircraft flares, jet exhausts, condensation trails, blinking or steady lights observed at night, lights circling near airports and airways, and other aircraft phenomena should not be reported as they do not fall within the definition of a UFO.

**EXCEPTION:** Reports of known objects will be made to FTD when this information originally had been reported by local news media as a UFO and the witness has contacted the Air Force. (Do NOT solicit reports.) News releases should be included as an attachment with the report (see paragraph 8c).

b. Detailed study will be made of the logic, consistency, and authenticity of the observer's report. An interview with the observer, by persons preparing the report, is especially valuable in determining the reliability of the source and the validity of the information. Factors for particular attention are the observer's age, occupation, and education, and whether he has a technical or scientific background. A report that a witness is completely familiar with certain aspects of a sighting should indicate specific qualifications to substantiate such familiarity.

c. The following procedures will assist the investigating officer in completing the report and arriving at a conclusion as required in paragraph 11.

(1) When feasible, contact local aircraft control and warning (ACW) units, and pilots and crews of aircraft aloft at the time and place of sighting. Contact any persons or organizations that may have additional data on the UFO or can verify evidence—visual, electronic, or other.

(2) Consult military or civilian weather forecasters for data on tracks of weather

balloons or any unusual meteorological activity that may have a bearing on the stimulus for the UFO.

(3) Consult navigators and astronomers in the area to determine if any astronomical body or phenomenon might account for the sighting.

(4) Consult military and civilian tower operators, air operations units, and airlines to determine if the sighting could have been an aircraft. Local units of the Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) can be of assistance in this regard.

(5) Consult persons who may know of experimental aircraft of unusual configuration, rocket and guided missile firings, or aerial tests in the area.

(6) Consult local and State police, county sheriffs, forest rangers, and other civil officials who may have been in the area at the time of the sighting or have knowledge of other witnesses.

#### 8. Transmittal of Reports:

a. *Timeliness.* Report all information on UFOs promptly. Electrical transmission with a "Priority" precedence is authorized.

b. *Submission of Reports.* Submit multiple-addressed electrical reports to:

- (1) ADC.
- (2) Nearest Air Division (Defense).
- (3) FTD WPAFB. (First line of text: FOR TDETR.)
- (4) CSAF. (First line of text: FOR AFRDC.)
- (5) OSAF. (First line of text: FOR SAF-OI.)

c. *Written Reports.* In the event follow-up action requires a letter report, send it to FTD (TDETR), Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio 45433. FTD will send the reports to interested organizations in the US and to SAF-OI if required.

d. *Reports from Civilians.* Advise civilians to report UFOs to the nearest Air Force base.

e. *Negative or Inapplicable Data.* If specific information is lacking, refrain from using the words "negative" or "unidentified" unless all logical leads to obtain the information outlined in paragraph 11 have been exhausted. For example, the information on weather conditions in the area, as requested in paragraph 11g, is obtainable from the local military or civilian weather facility. Use the phrase "not applicable (NA)" only when the question really does not apply to the sighting under investigation.

**10. Comments of Investigating Officer.** This officer will make an initial analysis and com-

ment on the possible cause or identity of the stimulus in a supporting statement. He will make every effort to obtain pertinent items of information and to test all possible leads, clues, and hypotheses. The investigating officer who receives the initial report is in a better position to conduct an on-the-spot survey and follow-up than subsequent investigative personnel and analysts who may be far removed from the area and who may arrive too late to obtain vital data or information necessary for firm conclusions. The investigating officer's comments and conclusions will be in the last paragraph of the report submitted through channels. The reporting official will contact FTD (Area Code 513, 257-0916 or 257-6678) for verbal authority to continue investigations.

**11. Basic Reporting Data and Format.** Show the abbreviation "UFO" at the beginning of the text of all electrical reports and in the subject of any follow-up written reports. Include required data in all electrical reports, in the order shown below:

a. Description of the Object(s):

- (1) Shape.
- (2) Size compared to a known object.
- (3) Color.
- (4) Number.
- (5) Formation, if more than one.
- (6) Any discernible features or details.
- (7) Tail, trail, or exhaust, including its size.
- (8) Sound.
- (9) Other pertinent or unusual features.

b. Description of Course of Object(s):

- (1) What first called the attention of observer(s) to the object(s)?
- (2) Angle of elevation and azimuth of object(s) when first observed. (Use theodolite or compass measurement if possible.)

(3) Angle of elevation of object(s) upon disappearance. (Use theodolite or compass measurement if possible.)

(4) Description of flight path and maneuvers of object(s). (Use elevations and azimuth, not altitude.)

(5) How did the object(s) disappear? (Instantaneously to the North, for example.)

(6) How long were the object(s) visible? (Be specific—5 minutes, 1 hour, etc.)

c. Manner of Observation:

(1) Use one or any combination of the following items: Ground-visual, air-visual, ground-electronic, air-electronic. (If electronic, specify type of radar.)

(2) Statement as to optical aids (tele-

scopes, binoculars, etc.) used and description thereof.

(3) If the sighting occurred while airborne, give type of aircraft, identification number, altitude, heading, speed, and home station.

d. Time and Date of Sighting:

(1) Greenwich date-time group of sighting and local time.

(2) Light conditions (use one of the following terms: Night, day, dawn, dusk).

e. Location of Observer(s). Give exact latitude and longitude coordinates of each observer, and/or geographical position. In electrical reports, give a position with reference to a known landmark in addition to the coordinates. For example, use "2 mi N of Deeville"; "3 mi SW of Blue Lake," to preclude errors due to teletype garbling of figures.

f. Identifying Information on Observer(s):

(1) Civilian—Name, age, mailing address, occupation, education and estimate of reliability.

(2) Military—Name, grade, organization, duty, and estimate of reliability.

g. Weather and Winds-Aloft Conditions at Time and Place of Sightings:

(1) Observer(s) account of weather conditions.

(2) Report from nearest AWS or US Weather Bureau Office of wind direction and velocity in degrees and knots at surface, 6,000', 10,000', 16,000', 20,000', 30,000', 50,000', and 80,000', if available.

(3) Ceiling.

(4) Visibility.

(5) Amount of cloud cover.

(6) Thunderstorms in area and quadrant in which located.

(7) Vertical temperature gradient.

h. Any other unusual activity or condition, meteorological, astronomical, or otherwise, that might account for the sighting.

i. Interception or identification action taken (such action is authorized whenever feasible and in compliance with existing air defense directives).

j. Location, approximate altitude, and general direction of flight of any air traffic or balloon releases in the area that might possibly account for the sighting.

k. Position title and comments of the preparing officer, including his preliminary analysis of the possible cause of the sightings(s). (See paragraph 10.)

**12. Reporting Physical Evidence:**

a. *Photographic:*

(1) Still Photographs. Forward the original negative to FTD (TDETR), Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio 45433, and indicate the place, time, and date the photograph was taken.

(2) Motion Pictures. Obtain the *original* film. Examine the film strip for apparent cuts, alterations, obliterations, or defects. In the report comment on any irregularities, particularly in films received from other than official sources.

(3) Supplemental Photographic Information. Negatives and prints often are insufficient to provide certain valid data or permit firm conclusions. Information that aids in plotting or in estimating distances, apparent size and nature of object, probable velocity, and movements includes:

(a) Type and make of camera.  
(b) Type, focal length, and make of lens.

(c) Brand and type of film.  
(d) Shutter speed used.  
(e) Lens opening used; that is, "f" stop.

(f) Filters used.  
(g) Was tripod or solid stand used.  
(h) Was "panning" used.

(i) Exact direction camera was pointing with relation to true North, and its angle with respect to the ground.

(4) Other Camera Data. If supplemental information is unobtainable, the minimum camera data required are the type of camera, and the smallest and largest "f" stop and shutter speed readings of the camera.

(5) Radar. Forward two copies of each still camera photographic print. Title radaroscope photographic prints per AFR 95-7. Classify radarscope photographs per AFR 205-1.

*NOTE:* If possible, develop film before forwarding. Mark undeveloped film clearly to indicate this fact, to avoid destruction by exposure through mail channels to final addressees.

b. *Material.* Air Force echelons receiving suspected or actual UFO material will safeguard it to prevent any defacing or alterations which might reduce its value for intelligence examination and analysis.

c. *Photographs, Motion Pictures, and Negatives Submitted by Individuals.* Individuals often submit photographic and motion picture material as part of their UFO reports. All original material submitted will be returned to the individual after completion of necessary studies, analysis, and duplication by the Air Force.

**BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE**

**OFFICIAL**

**J. P. McCONNELL**  
*General, U.S. Air Force*  
*Chief of Staff*

**R. J. PUGH**  
*Colonel, USAF*  
*Director of Administrative Services*

**Research and Development****UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS (UFO)**

AFR 80-17, 19 September 1966, is changed as follows:

3c. **EXCEPTIONS:** FTD at Wright-Patterson . . . for separate investigations. The University of Colorado will, under a research agreement with the Air Force, conduct a study of UFOs. This program (to run approximately 15 months) will be conducted independently and without restrictions. The university will enlist the assistance of other conveniently located institutions that can field investigative teams. All UFO reports will be submitted to the University of Colorado, which will be given the fullest cooperation of all UFO Investigating Officers. Every effort will be made to keep all UFO reports unclassified. However, if it is necessary to classify a report because of method of detection or other factors not related to the UFO, a separate report including all possible information will be sent to the University of Colorado.

8b(6). University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80302, ATTN: Dr. Condon. (Mail copy of message form.)

8e. **Negative or Inapplicable Data.** Rerunber as paragraph 9.

11k. Position title, name, rank, official address, telephone area code, office and home phone, and comments of the preparing officer, including his preliminary analysis of the possible cause of the sighting(s). (See paragraph 10.)

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

OFFICIAL

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